

REMARKS

The drawings were objected to for including the number 15, which did not appear in the specification, for using the number 11, 25 to reference different embodiments of the same features, and for reusing the number 30. Finally, the drawings were rejected for failing to illustrate the annular disc in three facets cross-hatched appropriately for the claimed materials. The drawings have been so amended and no new material has been added by these alternations. The Applicant submits that the objections have been overcome and reconsideration is requested.

The substitute specification was not entered for failing to contain a statement for lack of new matter. A substitute specification in compliance with 37 CFR 1.125(b) has been submitted with the present response. The section headings and description objections have additionally been addressed. The Applicant submits that the objections have all been overcome and reconsideration is requested.

Claim Objections claims 15 and 26-28 were objected to for confusing language. The claims have been amended and reconsideration is requested.

Claims rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph

Claims 17-31 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph as being indefinite for containing a preamble towards an assembly. The claims have been duly amended and reconsideration is requested.

Claims rejected under 35 USC 102(b)

Claims 1, 13, 14, 16-25 & 29-31 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Schote (2002/0110299). The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection with regard to remaining claims 17-31. The Applicant notes that Schote discloses a wheel bearing unit wherein a wheel bearing 3 is in direct contact with a radial face on a joint bell 4. Between the rotating joint bell 4 and a pivot bearing 2 (wheel knuckle 2) there is a light weight sealing ring 8. Schote fails to disclose an annular disc capable of accommodating the clamping forces between the wheel hub

and the outer joint part as claimed by the present invention. Reconsideration is therefore requested.

Claims 1, 13, 14, 16-25 & 29-31 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Booker (5,833,243). The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection and seeks reconsideration. Booker teaches an outer race 14 of a constant velocity joint 18 and a transfer case output component 12, wherein an elastic seal 22 is provided to seal an annular gap between the two parts. In Booker, even though the elastic seal 22 is deformed in its operatable state, there is still direct contact between the constant velocity outer race 14 and the transfer case component 12 at the component interface points 50,52, where clamping forces are to be accommodated. An annular ring 92 forming part of the elastic seal 22 is without contact with the component 12 and hence cannot accommodate clamping forces as clearly claimed by the present invention. Reconsideration is requested.

Claims 1, 13, 14, 16-25 & 29-31 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Hofmann (5,674,011). The Applicant traverses this rejection and seeks reconsideration. The Applicant asserts that Hofmann teaches a bearing arrangement 1 cooperating with a joint bell 2 with a connecting element 3 being arranged between the bearing arrangement and the joint bell. Hoffmann fails to disclose anything in regard to a clamping means, the clamping forces of which have been accommodated by the connecting element 3 as positively claimed by the present invention. Reconsideration is formally requested.

Claims 1,13,14,16-25, 29-31 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Otto (4,010,986). The Applicant traverses this rejection and seeks reconsideration. The Applicant asserts that Otto simply teaches a bearing arrangement for a vehicle wheel, wherein an outer joint part 6 is claimed against a wheel bearing with clamping forces being accommodated by direct contact. The slinger ring 18 in the circular groove is not meant to accommodate clamping forces as claimed by the present invention and therefore Otto fails to teach the underlying claimed limitations of the present invention and reconsideration is requested.

Claims rejected under 35 USC 10(a)

Claims 1 & 13-31 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamamoto (2004/0022471) in view of Coleman (2,713,504). The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection and seeks reconsideration. The office action asserts that Yamamoto teaches the underlying limitations of the present invention with the exception of the annular ring being bronze, bronze coating, or plastic. The Applicant strenuously traverses this assertion. Yamamoto teaches a bearing apparatus for a vehicle driving wheel wherein a fastening member combines the wheel hub 1 and the outer joint member 14. The clamping forces are accommodated by a caulked portion 8 of the wheel hub 1 and a shoulder 14b of the outer joint member 14 which are in direct abutment. An elastic ring 21 for sealing purposes is held by a pulsar ring 22, which has no contact with the wheel hub 1. Therefore, neither Yamamoto nor Coleman, either alone or in combination, teach the use of an annular ring that accommodates the clamping forces as claimed by the present invention. Reconsideration is requested.

With regard to Coleman, it is acknowledged that discs may be made of bronze, bronze coatings, or plastic but that has no bearing on the novel and inventive subject matter claimed in the present invention.

Claims 1 & 13-31 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mizukoshi (6,135,571) in view of Coleman. The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection and seeks reconsideration. The Applicant asserts that Mizukoshi teaches a device wherein there is an annular gap 38 between a crimped portion 27 of the wheel hub 6a and the outer joint part 11. Axial forces between the wheel hub 6a and the outer joint part 11 are accommodated by a stop ring 34 or similar devices engaging the annular grooves 13, 14 in the wheel hub and on a splined shaft 40 of the outer joint part 11. The lacking ring 49 of a sealing element 49 thus fails to accommodate clamping forces as there are no clamping means acting between the wheel hub and the outer joint part. Therefore, neither Mizukoshi nor Coleman, either alone or in combination, teach the underlying novel limitations of the present invention and reconsideration is formally requested.

Conclusion

Having overcome all of the objections and rejections set forth in the Office Action, Applicants submit that claims 17-31 are in a condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance indicating the same is therefore earnestly solicited. The Examiner is invited to telephone the Applicant's undersigned attorney at (248) 433-7221 if any unresolved matters remain.

Respectfully Submitted,

DICKINSON WRIGHT PLLC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas E. Donohue", is written over a horizontal line.

Thomas E. Donohue, Reg. No. 44,660
38525 Woodward Avenue, Ste. 2000
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304
(248) 433-7200

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